

Ebla and the Gods of Canaan

ROBERT R. STIEGLITZ

Before the discovery of the Ebla archive, there were four primary sources for the study of the gods and goddesses worshiped by the Canaanites: (1) the Hebrew Bible, especially the prophetic literature, which provides eye-witness accounts of Canaanite cultic practices in the Iron Age and later, (2) the corpus of Phoenician and Punic monuments, which are contemporary with the biblical narratives, (3) the *Phoenician History* by Philo of Byblos, a composition of the Roman era, thoroughly Hellenized, but containing very valuable material on Canaanite mythology and cosmogony, and (4) the texts from Ugarit of the Late Bronze Age. Of these sources, the tablets from Ugarit provide the most comprehensive picture of Canaanite religion. This includes the pantheon, cultic observances and ritual practices, and a variety of mythological poems and narratives.

Evidence about Canaanite cults before the Late Bronze Age had to be collected piecemeal from scattered sources. Mesopotamian and Egyptian documents, the evidence of Canaanite place-names, and archeological remains, all provided some of the pieces for assembling the mosaic of religion in Canaan before 1500 B.C.

The archives from Ebla have altered all of this. We now have a major new resource: the large archive of a great city-state that flourished in the 25th century B.C. Ebla was located not very far from Ugarit, but its tablets are dated a full millennium before the Ugaritic documents. The texts from Ebla provide the first detailed picture of religious practices at a major urban center, on the periphery of Canaan in the Early Bronze Age. I say periphery, because Ebla was located in that region of northern Syria which is situated between Canaan and Mesopotamia.

The site of Ebla is inland, located some 100 km east of Mount Casius (=Akkadian *Ḫazi*, Ugaritic *Ṣpn*, Hebrew *Ṣpôn*), the Canaanite equivalent to the Greek Olympus. Ebla is thus situated midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates River, in a region which was long the meeting ground of diverse peoples: Canaanites, Amorites, Hurrians, Akkadians, and Sumerians.

Given this situation, it may be expected that the culture of Ebla would reflect the cultural heritages of both Canaan and Mesopotamia—especially in the realm of religion. The following remarks are intended as preliminary

observations on the complex question of how the gods of Ebla may be compared to, and contrasted with, the deities worshiped by the Canaanites during the centuries following the Middle Bronze Age.

The Pantheon of Ebla

In his pioneering study of the Ebla tablets, G. Pettinato estimated that the texts of Ebla enumerate some five hundred divine names.¹ A close examination of the published texts, however, reveals that this number is highly exaggerated. The number of divine names attested thus far in the Ebla texts is, in fact, about one hundred.² Of these, the majority are not truly proper names of deities, but divine epithets. When one actually eliminates all the titles and epithets, one is left with about forty names of gods and goddesses. This number corresponds remarkably well to the "official" pantheon lists of Ugarit, attested in both Akkadian and Ugaritic.³ These so-called canonical deity lists, which exclude divine epithets, enumerate a total of thirty-three major deities in the Canaanite pantheon. Numerically, then, the pantheon of Ebla may be seen as quite comparable to its Canaanite counterpart a millennium later. The differences are manifested not in the numbers, but in the names of the gods.

The pantheon of Ebla consisted primarily of Semitic divine names. The non-Semitic names are either Hurrian deities or as yet unidentified. Pettinato has argued that four Hurrian divine names are attested at Ebla, and, therefore, he postulated the existence of Hurrians in the society of Ebla in the Early Bronze Age.⁴ The evidence for the Hurrian deities at Ebla is, I believe, not convincing at all, and these so-called Hurrian names may be explained as either Sumerian or Semitic deities.

The Sumerian deities at Ebla were apparently included due to a lack of suitable Semitic counterparts. Thus, the Sumerian ^{EN.LIL} becomes *I-li-lu* in Eblaite (MEE 4:290, #802), ^{NIN.KAR.DU} is Eblaite *Ni-ka-ra-du* (MEE 4:289, #798), ^{SUMUQAN} in Eblaite is *Sa-ma-gan*,⁵ ^{ASNAN} is *A-sá-na-an*,⁶ and several others may be added to this list. The selectivity exhibited in these Sumerian

¹ G. Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla* (Garden City, NY, 1981) 245.

² F. Pomponio, "I nomi divini nei testi di Ebla," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 15 (1983) 141-56, found a total of some seventy-five divine names and epithets in the theophoric names. To these must be added the divine names attested in the Sumerian-Eblaite vocabulary lists and in the ritual texts. A. Archi, "Ebla and Eblaite," in *Eblaitea* 1:10, estimates the number of divine names at about one hundred.

³ The Akkadian list is RS 20.24 (*Ugaritica* 5:44). The Ugaritic lists are RS 24.643 (*Ugaritica* 5:580) and UT 17.

⁴ Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla*, 251.

⁵ W. G. Lambert, "The Reading of the Divine Name Sakkán," *Orientalia* 55 (1986) 152-58, suggests that the name Samkan, or Sakkán, was the Emegi-dialect form of the name, while the Emesal form was Sumuqan (Sumuqan).

⁶ MEE 4:291, #812. Note also that ^{ASNAN-MAH}, (#811) and ^{ASNAN-TUR} (#813) had been borrowed into Eblaite.

borrowings strongly suggests that the people of Ebla had an intimate knowledge of Sumerian cultic practices, for in the majority of cases the Eblaite utilized their native names for deities. The Sumerian divine names are the exceptions, not the rule.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the Ebla pantheon is the fact that two of its most prominent members have resisted identification. These are the deities whose names are written as ^{KU.RA} and ^{NI.DA.KUL/BAL}.⁷ A third very popular deity was *Da-mu*, whose name may be derived from Semitic *dam-blood*, or it could be a by-form of Sumerian *DUMU* 'son'. But since the bilinguals list for the Sumerian god *DUMU.ZI* the Eblaite equivalent *Su-um* 'Name',⁸ it is more likely that *Damu* was an Old Semitic deity, and not an Eblaite version of a Sumerian god.⁹

The so-called Hurrian deities at Ebla are Adam(m)a, Aštabi, Hapat, and Išhara. Here, however, various objections must be raised to identifying these divine names as Hurrian. The deity Adama, or Adamma, is usually called Hurro-Anatolian, and is also attested at Ugarit.¹⁰ There is evidence of a goddess called *Adum*, a consort of the god Reshef, whose name is connected with the biblical term *ádóm*- 'the red (earth)'.¹¹ This divine name is perhaps best known from the rare biblical theophoric name *Óbēd-Adóm* (2 Sam 6:10, etc.), meaning 'Servant-of-(the goddess) Adóm' (instead of the Masoretic vocalization *ēdóm*). Now at Ebla, the deity Adam(m)a also appears in connection with the god Rasap (ARET 2:112, 3:310), and this may well be the same divine pair at Ebla, as in later Canaanite culture. I would suggest, therefore, that Eblaite Adam(m)a is not Hurrian, but a Semitic name, or title, of a netherworld goddess associated with the lord of the netherworld.

The divine name read Aštabi by Pettinato is written ^{AS-tá-GIBIL}, and this name can also be read as *As-tá-pil*.¹² I am inclined to compare this

⁷ See ARET 3: 311; Pompanio, "I nomi divini," 145. W. G. Lambert, "The Identity of the Eblaite God NidaKUL," *Orientalia* 23 (1984) 43-44, sought to connect this deity with the moon god Yarib.

⁸ C. H. Gordon, "Eblaitea," in *Eblaitea* 1:26.

⁹ The deity of Amarna-age Byblos called ^{DA.MU} (EA 83) was identified by O. Schroeder ("Ueber den Namen des Tamúz von Byblos in der Amarnazeit," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 18 [1915] 291-93) as a by-form of Sumerian *DUMU(z)*. W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, NY, 1969) 147, further proposed the unlikely equation of this *DA.MU* (whom he identified with Adonis) with Canaanite Kothar. The god *Damu* at Ebla is evidently not a by-form of *DUMU.ZI*, and thus the deity *DA.MU* of Amarna-age Byblos must now be reexamined in light of *Damu* at Ebla.

¹⁰ For Ugaritic alphabetic *adm*, see E. Laroche, "Notes sur le panthéon hourrite de Ras Shamra," *JOS* 88 (1968) 148-50.

¹¹ See Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 140, with references. The Babylonian consort of Reshef, *Allatu*, corresponds to the Ugaritic *Arly* in the pantheon lists (see n. 3 above). As the name of the latter means 'Earthy', it is likely that *Adam(m)a*, meaning 'Red (Earth)', is a title of this goddess.

¹² Pomponio, "I nomi divini," 143ff., reads ^{AS-tá-bis} (following Pettinato). A. Archi and M. G. Biga, in ARET 3:310, normalized this name as ^{AS-tá-pil}.

reading with the Ugaritic divine name *ʿtpr*, which is part of the binomial name *ʿAthtar-wa-ʿtpr*.¹³ In contrast to the well-known name and character of the god *ʿAthtar*, the meaning of his secondary name remains enigmatic. It is almost certainly Semitic.¹⁴ From Ugarit we know that the Hurrian god identified with *ʿAthtar* was indeed *Aštapi*, but the Eblaite god *ʿAš-tá-pil* (i.e., **ʿAštāpir*) seems to me to correspond to the Ugaritic *ʿtpr*, rather than to its Hurrian equivalent *Aštābi*.

The Hurrian goddess *Hebat* is well known as the consort of the storm god *Teshub*. Pettinato identified the Eblaite name *Ḥapat* with Hurrian *Hebat*.¹⁵ The difficulties in this identification were noted by Pomponio, for it seems that the reading *Ḥa-a-pa-tu* may be interpreted as a variant orthography for *Ka-ba-du*,¹⁶ an epithet derived from the Semitic root *kbd* 'glory'. The divine name *Kabid-* is, indeed, known from Amorite personal names.¹⁷ Thus, the Hurrian *Ḥapat* at Ebla is also rather doubtful.

Finally, the goddess *Išhara* was also postulated as a Hurrian deity by Pettinato. At Ebla this divine name is written with various Sumerograms (^dBARA₇, ^dBARA_{7/10}-*iš*, ^dBARA₁₀-*ra*, ^dAMA-*ra*),¹⁸ and is translated into Eblaite as *Iš-ḥa-ra*/*Iš-ḥa-la* (MEE 4:291, #809). This in itself suggests that the Sumerian term is simply borrowed into Eblaite, as in the cases of other Sumerian deities discussed above. The goddess *Išhara* is attested in the Canaanite pantheon of Ugarit, in the form *Ušḥry*, and also in the Hurrian pantheon at Ugarit, in the form *Ušḥr*.¹⁹ It seems likely that this deity was originally a Sumerian goddess, adopted by both Canaanites and Hurrians.

In summary, the case for Hurrian divinities at Ebla is rather weak. The deities *Adam(m)a*, *Aštāpil*, *Kabad*, and *Išhara* are either of Semitic or Sumerian origin.

Some of the deities attested at Ebla, which are not Sumerian, are without Canaanite counterparts because they are connected with local ethno-geographical situations. As examples, I cite the gods *Lim*, *Baliha*, and *Daban*.²⁰

Setting aside those deities of Mesopotamian origin and the unidentified or doubtful cases, and examining the remaining pantheon, one can discern what I call the Old Semitic core of deities. This core, consisting of a dozen gods and goddesses, may conveniently be divided into two groups: (1) a celestial set

consisting of *Hadda*, *ʿAthtar*, *Aštāpil*, *Kabkab*, *Suinu*, and *UTU*, and (2) a terrestrial set consisting of *Il*, *Dagan*, *Ḥayyum*, *Kamish*,²¹ *Malik*, and *Rasap*.

This core of Old Semitic deities can now serve as a basis for comparison, and contrast, with the Canaanite gods in the Late Bronze Age. When one compares these deities of Ebla with their Canaanite descendants, it is striking to note that they appear—with two notable exceptions—with the very same names in the Canaanite pantheons of the Bronze and Iron Ages.

Before proceeding to examine this Old Semitic core of deities, I pose the question of how to define the basic character of the Ebla pantheon. Is it Sumero-Semitic? Or an essentially Old Semitic pantheon? And if Semitic, can one be more specific? The answer to this question is provided not merely by an analysis of the Ebla pantheon, but by looking at the names given to the four city gates of Ebla. The gates were all named after major deities, a custom known from other ancient cities. At Ebla, all the gates were named after Semitic gods, namely, *Baal*, *Rasap*, ^dBE (Eblaite reading unknown), and ^dUTU (Eblaite reading unknown).²²

Two of these four gods (*Rasap* and the *Sun*) occur in the Old Semitic core. The other two names (*Baal* and ^dBE) are certainly the Semitic titles of major gods, most likely *Hadda* and *Dagan*, respectively.²³ These gate names are a fair indication that one would be justified in characterizing the pantheon of Ebla as "proto-Canaanite."

One of these four gods was probably also the patron deity of the city. I would suggest that this was *Rasap*, lord of the netherworld. Pettinato has called attention to a text which mentions 'the god *Dabir*, the god of Ebla'.²⁴ *Dabir* is known from the Bible as a synonym of *Reshef* (Hab 3:5), and W. F. Albright surmised that this Hebrew pairing is a reflex of some binomial Canaanite divine name.²⁵ I now suggest, therefore, that *Dabir*, the patron of Ebla, is indeed to be understood as a title or byname of *Rasap*.²⁶

I note here that *Ra-sa-ap* is equated with Sumerian ^dNE.ER1₁₀ (MEE 4:290, #806). The Sumerian name means 'Ruler of the City', that is, the (netherworld) city. In later times, of course, the Sumerian form of this name was ^{NE}.ER1₁₀.*GAL* 'Ruler of the Great City', leading to the familiar Babylonian and Hebrew pronunciation of this name as *Nergal*.

²¹ Kamish is not listed in the Ugaritic pantheon texts, but is well attested in ritual texts and in theophoric names.

²² Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla*, 143.

²³ Note the equation ^dBE KALAM^{im} = *Ti-lu ma-tim* (MEE 4:259, #795a), which suggests that ^dBE may be a title of *Ḥayyum* (*Ea*), as the latter is the god of terrestrial freshwater. In the Babylonian tradition, indeed, ^dBE = *Ea* is known. In the Ugaritic pantheon lists, ^dBE ù BE = *Ars-w-Snm* 'Earth and Heaven'. See my remarks on this deity in "Ugaritic Sky-Gods and Biblical Heavens," *Newsletter for Ugaritic Studies* 35 (April 1986) 13.

²⁴ Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla*, 247.

²⁵ Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 186.

²⁶ Contra M. Dahood, "Ebla, Ugarit, and the Bible," in Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla*, 296, I believe *Dabir* and *Reshef* at Ebla are one and the same deity. *Reshef* appears in the Hurrian pantheon at Ugarit in the form *Iršp*.

¹³ On this deity, see M. C. Astour, "Some New Divine Names from Ugarit," *JAOs* 86 (1966) 277-84.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 278f.

¹⁵ Pomponio, "I nomi divini," 144 n. 17.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 145 n. 18, with references.

¹⁷ I. J. Gelb, "An Old Babylonian List of Amorites," *JAOs* 88 (1968) 39-46.

¹⁸ Pomponio, "I nomi divini," 143f.

¹⁹ Laroche, "Notes sur le panthéon hourrite," 148. The pantheon lists (above n. 3) indicate the equation Ugaritic *Ušḥry* = Akkadian *Išhara*.

²⁰ The "Amorite" deity *Lim* is extremely rare at Ugarit. On *Baliha* see G. Pettinato, "Culto ufficiale ad Ebla durante il regno di Ibbi-Sipiš," *Ori* 18 (1979) 85-215. On *Daban* see J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1972) 18.

The Sumerian form at Ebla evidently represents an earlier name of this god, but one which corresponds exactly to the Phoenician title of this deity, namely, Melqart (< **Milk-Qart* 'King of the City').²⁷ Melqart in the Iron Age was the patron of Tyre, just as Dabir was the patron of Ebla in the Early Bronze Age. Both Dabir and Melqart are but aspects of one deity—Rasap/Reshef.

The Old Semitic Core of Deities

The texts from Ebla have provided many insights into the names and antiquity of Canaanite deities. This is especially significant for the study of the Old Semitic core. In some cases, such as the god Il 'the God', or UTU 'the Sun', the Ebla documents have not as yet provided much new light. The other members of this group (celestial: Hadda, Athtar, Aštapi, Kabkab, Suinu; terrestrial: Dagan, Hayyūm, Kamish, Malik, Rasap) can now be viewed from an entirely different perspective. As comparative studies proceed, it will be possible to outline the development, syncretisms, and survivals in the various cults of these deities. I begin with Hadda/Baal.

The active head of the Canaanite pantheon was the storm god Baal, 'the Lord'. His proper name was *Hadd*-Thunderer,²⁸ and he was routinely referred to in Ugaritic mythology as *Bin-Dagan* 'Son of Dagan'. At Ebla, Hadda (written *d²l-da*) is well attested in both theophoric names and ritual texts, while the title Baal is less frequent. The texts do not indicate specifically who was the active head of the Eblaite pantheon. As seen above, however, a city gate of Ebla was named after Baal, thus illustrating his prominent status in the cult. For the present, I shall assume that the Eblaite title Baal does indeed refer to the god Hadda. At Ugarit, the storm god had a terrestrial home located atop a sacred mountain called *Špn*. It is unknown if a similar concept prevailed in the cult of Hadda at Ebla.

The god Dagan is also well attested in the Ebla archives.²⁹ A standard title of Dagan at Mari of the Middle Bronze Age was *Bél-pagrê* 'Lord of the Corpses', indicating the essentially chthonic character and associations of this deity.³⁰ Unfortunately, we do not know if Dagan was already considered to be the father of Hadda/Baal in the Early Bronze Age. Pettinato has suggested that the Eblaite divine title *d²BE* refers to Dagan.³¹ If indeed the equation

²⁷ W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (5th ed.; Garden City, NY, 1969) 194 n. 29, already suggested in 1936 that Melqart (Mei-carth) was an appellation meaning 'king of the city', referring to the underworld.

²⁸ From the Semitic root *hdd* 'to thunder'; thus, his most common byname is Hadad.

²⁹ G. Pettinato and H. Waetzoldt, "Dagan in Ebla und Mesopotamien nach der texten aus dem 3. Jahrtausend," *Orientalia* 54 (1985) 234-56.

³⁰ J. F. Healey, "The Underworld Character of the God Dagan," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 5 (1977) 43-51.

³¹ Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla*, 246; Pettinato and Waetzoldt, "Dagan in Ebla und Mesopotamien," 244.

d²BE = Dagan is substantiated, it would mean that two of the city gates of Ebla were named after the primary titles of Hadda and Dagan respectively.

The relationship between Hadda and Dagan is the subject of a most interesting explanation, provided by Philo of Byblos. According to his version, *Hadd*- (Greek *Ἀδῶδος*) was actually the son of Ouranos by his primary concubine.³² In the ensuing war between Ouranos and his son El, the then-pregnant concubine was captured, and given by El as a gift to his brother(!) Dagan. She then gave birth, in Dagan's house, to a son whom she called *Dēmarous* (= Ugaritic *Dmri*; *UT* 51:viii:39). The latter is a byname, or title, of *Hadd*-/Baal.

This extraordinary version on the origins of Baal requires an investigation which lies outside the scope of this paper. It is sufficient to note here that Philo's explanation is evidently an attempt to rationalize a complex Canaanite tradition concerning the paternity of the pantheon's chief god. The relationship between Dagan and Hadda at Ebla should provide the key to the Phoenician tradition. One should also ask if Baal's title *Bin-Dagan* is a Canaanite development, one which originated after the Early Bronze Age.

Eblaite Aštar, like its Akkadian counterpart Išhtar, is equated with Sumerian Inanna (MEE 4:290, #805). In form, it corresponds to Canaanite Athtar. The latter has a well-developed mythology in the Ugaritic texts, and in later times this god was identified with Venus as the morning star.³³ At Ebla, as among the Akkadians, Aštar is probably a goddess. The Canaanites, however, developed a separate female deity named Astarte (Ugaritic *ʿItrr*), while retaining the male deity Athtar. As noted above, the full Canaanite name of this male god was *ʿItrr-wa-ʿItrr*. Both of these names are now attested at Ebla, if my equation of Ugaritic *ʿItrr* = Eblaite *Aštapi* (< **Aštapi*) is correct.

It is conceivable that at Ebla the goddess Aštar was already connected with the god Aštapi. In later times, after the cults of Canaan had developed a female deity called Astarte, the form Aštar (grammatically masculine) was combined with the name *ʿItrr*/Aštapi, and served as a counterpart to Astarte. Astronomically, Athtar and Astarte were then identified with two aspects of Venus, as morning and evening star, respectively. However, no such development took place in Mesopotamia, where Išhtar alone remained as the queen of heaven.

Two very popular deities at Ebla, judging by the frequent appearance of their names in the texts, are the gods Kamish and Malik. The presence of Kamish at Ebla shows that this deity was already imbedded in the Early Bronze Age of Syria, long before his better-known role as the national god of

³² H. W. Attridge and R. A. Oden, *Philo of Byblos: The Phoenician History* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1981) 47; and A. I. Baumgarten, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos* (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 16.

³³ J. Gray, "The Desert God Athtar in the Literature and Religion of Canaan," *JNES* 8 (1949) 72-83.

the Iron Age Moabites. The best known place-name containing the name of this god is Kār-Kamish (Carchemish), which is now attested at Ebla.³⁴ At Ugarit the name of this deity appears as a binomial formation *Ṭī-w-Kmī*.³⁵ The first element of this name, *Ṭī* 'Clay' may be compared to the hitherto unidentified Eblaite divine name ⁶ṬI.DU (ARET 4:268), which would normalize as ⁶Ṭī-ṭū. While *Ṭītu* has a good Semitic etymology, the name Kamish is still enigmatic. In the case of *ʿAhtiar-wa-ʿAštāpir* too, the first element of the divine name has a good Semitic etymology, while the origin of the second name remains unclear.

The god Malik is probably best known from the various biblical references to Molech, the national god of the Iron Age Ammonites (1 Kgs 11:7). From Ugarit we know that the primary cultic center of the god Malik in the Late Bronze Age was the city of *ʿAštārātu* (RS 24.244:41 [*Ugaritica* 5:565]). Another Ugaritic text (RS 24.252:2–3 [*Ugaritica* 5:551]) indicates that Malik is to be identified with the deity *Rpu* (probably **Rapiʿu*), who is associated with the towns of *ʿAštārātu* and *Hdr*³⁶.

The city of *ʿAštārātu*, in the Bashan region of Transjordan, is well known, beginning with the Egyptian execration texts of the Middle Bronze Age. When the Hebrews entered the land of Canaan, they found in Bashan the Amorite king *ʿŪg*, whose capital cities were at *ʿAštārôt* 'Astartes' and at *ʿEdre*³⁷ 'Hadd the Shepherd',³⁶ the old cultic centers of Malik/*Rapiʿu*. A curious late survival of this Old Semitic god is listed by the Byzantine grammarian Hesychios, who notes that in the Cypriote city of Amathous, the god Herakles (i.e., Phoenician Melqart) was worshipped under the name *Málika*.

The existence of the Eblaite deity *Kabkab* 'the Star'³⁷ is of interest in connection with Amos 5:26. In this verse, the prophet alludes to astral deities to be worshipped by the Israelites. The standard translations of this verse do not recognize that "the star" (Hebrew *kôkab*) mentioned by Amos is most likely not the common noun, but a divine name:

You shall carry Sakkuth, your king,
and Kaiwan, your images; *Kôkab*, your god,
which you have made for yourselves.

In light of Ebla, I interpret *Kokab* as parallel to the gods Sakkuth and Kaiwan. In the so-called Ashur treaty text, the god ⁶MUL (Eblaite *Kabkab*) is

³⁴ G. Pettinato, "Carchemish—Kār-Kamiš: Le prime attestazioni del III millennio," *OA* 15 (1976) 11–15.

³⁵ RS 24.244:36 (*Ugaritica* 5:565); RS 24.251:16 (*Ugaritica* 5:576). The variant *ṭi-w-Kmī* in RS 24.271:5 (*Ugaritica* 5:584) seems to me to be a scribal error. Astour, "New Divine Names from Ugarit," 278, considered the possibility that this name is yet another binomial name of Kamish. In light of the known A-and-B types, but lack of C-and-B type divine names, this possibility appears unlikely.

³⁶ Deut 1:4, Josh 13:12. In the latter, the Amorite king *ʿŪg* is termed a descendant of the Rephaim, just as king Danel at Ugarit is called 'man of *Rpu*'.

³⁷ MEE 4:288, #781. Note that Ugaritic *Kbkb* in *UT* 51:iv:17 may be interpreted as a divine name.

listed together with Hadda and the sun deity as guarantors of the treaty.³⁸ This deity, then, was not a minor figure, and it is most likely that the term 'Star' was not a proper name but a title. In later times, the feminine form of this term, *Kaukabt-* was a standard title of the goddess Astarte.³⁹ Is *Kabkab* already a title of Aštar at Ebla? Hopefully, additional texts will provide the answer to this question.

Only two names in the Old Semitic core of deities do not appear in the same form in Canaan, namely, the Eblaite moon god *Suimu* (MEE 4:289, #799a), and the deity of subterranean springs called *Ḥayyūm* (written *ḫ-um*) (MEE 4:290, #803). These gods do appear, of course, in the Canaanite pantheon under different names. The Canaanite moon god is *Yariḥ*, while the Old Semitic *Ḥayyūm* is replaced by the god of crafts called *Kušarru* (Ugaritic *Kšr*, Phoenician *Chusor*).⁴⁰

The reasons for these name changes are due, I suspect, to influences originating in the early part of the Middle Bronze Age in Canaan. The term *suinu*, or *sinnu*, is attested as a common noun in Akkadian, with the meaning 'crescent' (*CAD* S, 294, s.v. *sīnu*). This is certainly an appropriate title for the moon. Indeed, one finds the synonymous term *sahr-* 'crescent' as another title for the lunar deity in Canaan.⁴¹ In Mesopotamia, it was the name *Sin* that remained the primary term for the moon god, while in Canaan one finds instead the name *Yariḥ*. The latter is the common Semitic noun for 'moon, month'. There is, however, what appears to be a survival of the divine name *Suimu* in Canaan proper. I refer to the hitherto unexplained city name Beth-Shean. This name surely means the 'House/Temple of (the god) Shean/Shan'.⁴² But no such Canaanite deity is known—except for the Eblaite *Suimu*, or **Šurʿīnu*.

I note here another example of a Semitic divine name known only from Mesopotamia, but preserved in a Canaanite toponym, namely, Beth-Lehem 'House/Temple of (the god) Laḥmu'. This divine name, evidently meaning 'hairy',⁴³ has left no obvious reflexes in Canaanite religion, but it was perpetuated in the mythology of Mesopotamia well into Assyrian times.

The Eblaite divine name *Ḥayyūm* is usually normalized in Akkadian as *Ea*.⁴⁴ Literally, it means 'the Living One, Life'. In both Hebrew and Arabic, the cognates of this term are used to designate the subterranean spring waters,

³⁸ Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla*, 105; D. O. Edzard, "Der Text TM.75.G.1444 aus Ebla," *SEB* 4 (1981) 38.

³⁹ M. C. Astour, *Hellenosemitica* (2d ed.; Leiden, 1967) 179. Note also Ugaritic *kôkbt* in *UT* 6:17, 2001:rev.:6, as a title of Astarte? Also see R. R. Stieglitz, "The Hebrew Names of the Seven Planets," *JNES* 40 (1981) 136.

⁴⁰ *Ugaritica* 5: no. 137:iv:19 provides the equation ⁶A.A(!) = *Eyān* = *Kšr-šar-ru*.

⁴¹ The Hebrew cognate is *sahar*; Aramaic has *šahar-*. Note also *šaharōn-* in *Judg* 8:21, etc.

See *CAD* S, 184, s.v. *sarru* B.

⁴² The common form of the name is *Bêt-Šēʿān*. The variant *Bêt-Šān* appears in 1 Sam 31:10, 12; 2 Sam 21:12.

⁴³ W. G. Lambert, "The Pair Laḥmu-Laḥamu in Cosmology," *Orientalia* 54 (1985) 189–202.

⁴⁴ Roberts, *Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 19ff., normalizes this name as *ʿAy(y)a*, and suggests a derivation from the root *hyy* 'to live'.

which are termed the 'living waters' or 'waters of life' (the biblical *mayyim hayyim*). But the original function of this deity was transformed over the millennia. At Ebla the Sumerian ^d_{EN.KI} was called *Ḥayyum*, but at Ugarit ^d_{EN.KI} was known as *Kušarru* 'Skill'.⁴⁵ His home was then in Kaptaru, and he was the patron of craftsmanship.

Conclusions

In spite of their rather remote age, the archives of Ebla can shed much light on the gods of Canaan, and even on later Phoenician religion. Let me illustrate with a final example from Phoenician theology. According to Philo of Byblos, the father of the Phoenician sky god was called Elioum 'Most High', and his consort was named Berouth.⁴⁶ The name of Berouth has elicited various etymologies, the most plausible, to my mind, being a connection with the word *be'erôt* 'fountains'.⁴⁷ The latter is probably best known as the name of the Lebanese city Beirut,⁴⁸ but it is also found in southern Canaan in the town of *Be'erôt* (2 Sam 4:2, etc.). Both towns may well have been named after the goddess, not merely 'wells'. In any event, Ebla can now contribute new insights into the nature of this deity.

The Sumerian-Eblaite bilingual lists (MEE 4:336, #1343') supply the equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{AB.A} &= \text{tî-}^2\text{-}^2\text{-}^2\text{ma-tum} \\ &= \text{bu-la-tum} \end{aligned}$$

Here, the Sumerian word for 'sea' is defined by two Eblaite synonyms. The first is the well-known term *tihamatum* (Ugaritic *thmt*, Akkadian divine name *Tiāmat*). The second term, to be normalized as *bu²rātum* 'wells',⁴⁹ provides the Eblaite cognate to Canaanite *be'erôt*. The Eblaite term indicates that in early mythology the term *bu²rātum*/*be'erôt* originally designated the 'primeval sea', and was a synonym of *Tiāmat*. The goddess *Bu²rātum*/*Be'erôt* was the perfect consort for Elioum. In Philo's theology, the primary son of Elioum was the sky god Ouranos (=Canaanite *Šmm*). At Ugarit, the sky god indeed was paired with the goddess *Tihamatum*,⁵⁰ who, we now know, was identical with Berouth.

My brief remarks on the connections between the Early Bronze Age deities of Ebla and their later Canaanite counterparts suggest some striking

continuity coupled with selective changes. This is only an apparent paradox. The continuity of the "proto-Canaanite" cults was assured by the perpetual popularity of the Old Semitic core of deities. The fundamental concerns of the people with the deities of celestial/atmospheric phenomena (the Heavenly Host of the Bible), and the apprehensions about those of the netherworld (biblical Sheol), were not drastically altered in ancient Canaanite religion.

Nevertheless, the vicissitudes in political fortunes, after the collapse of the Early Bronze Age civilization in Canaan, were accompanied by the settlement of new peoples (Amorites, Hurrians, and others). These new settlers brought about innovations and changes to the culture of Canaan. But the pantheon of Ebla, and its language, indicate clearly that it is no longer necessary to look only to the Akkadians as the source for the transmission of Sumerian culture to Canaan.⁵¹ The Ebla texts demonstrate that a substantial Sumerian legacy existed in pre-Sargonic Syria—brought there by the Sumerians themselves. This Sumerian stratum existed side by side with the Old Semitic traditions that the Semites presumably had brought with them from their homeland.⁵²

Further studies will, hopefully, clarify the details of how the Old Semitic core evolved after the Early Bronze Age. As I have noted, by the end of the Late Bronze Age peculiar local developments had been established in various regions of Canaan. To understand these developments, one must now look to Ebla as the starting point for any such investigations.

⁵¹ Roberts, *Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 154, concludes that An and Enlil were introduced into the Semitic pantheon as a result of Sargon's conquests. This assumption is unwarranted in the light of pre-Sargonic *Illiu* and other Sumerian deities at Ebla.

⁵² The Early Dynastic Sumerian terms in Eblaite may well account for such survivals as Canaanite/Hebrew *ḥēykal* 'palace' and Hebrew *ḥiddeqel* 'Tigris'. Canaanite also borrowed Sumerian terms from Akkadian, when Sumerian was no longer a spoken language.

⁴⁵ The full name of this god at Ugarit was *Kjir-w-Ḥss* 'Skill-and-Wisdom', and his byname was *Ḥyn* 'Deft'.

⁴⁶ Attridge and Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 47.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 86 n. 81.

⁴⁸ In the El Amarna letters, this name is written *l.pū(.MEŠ)*, or syllabically as *Be-ru-ta*.

⁴⁹ The *l/r* interchange is well known at Ebla. I prefer to interpret the form as a feminine

plural *bu²rātum*, like Akkadian *bērāta* and Canaanite **bī²rātum*.

⁵⁰ Stieglitz, "Ugaritic Sky-Gods," 13.